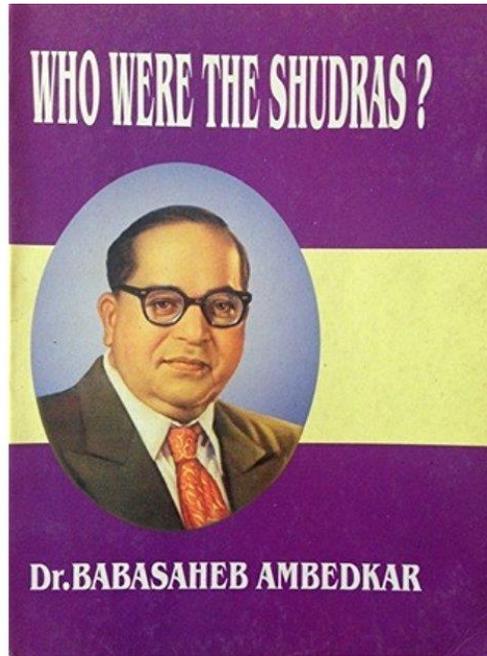


**Dalit Literature and Dalit Movements Continued Dr. Ambedkar's  
Ideology and Strategy**

**P. Ranjith Kumar**



**Abstract**

The age-old issue discussed deeply in India for many years and continued even today is Casteism. It is a social evil. Started from Lord Buddha many reformers and thinkers fought against Caste system by using their own strategy and ideology. The very vibrant ideology and strategy given by Dr. Ambedkar to eradicate caste system is "Educate Agitate Organize". Many Dalit intellectuals follow Dr. Ambedkar and his ideology. Many Dalit writers like Sharan Kumar Limbale, Omprakash Valmiki, Narendra Jadhav, Vasant Moon, Bama and Gurram Joshua, etc. insisted his ideology and strategy in their writings. In the same way Dalit Movements like Depressed India Association (Pune), Hyderabad State Depressed Classes Association, Sanmarg Bodhak Nirashrit Samaj (Nagpur), and South Indian Buddhist Association, etc., in India created awareness (Educate) among Dalits and organize them for their liberation. Both Dalit Literature and Dalit Movements agitate Dalits by giving awareness to be one. This paper projects that Dalit Literature and Dalit Movements Continued Dr. Ambedkar's Ideology and Strategy.

**Key Words:** Ambedkar, Educate Agitate Organize -- Dalit Liberation -- Dalit writers -- Caste System -- Dalit Movements in India.

## **Introduction**

In the field of English Literature in India the current focus of the area is Subaltern Studies. If it is narrowed down, Dalit Literature is the center of discussion. Dalit writers project Dalits' lives and their own experiences in their works. Due to continuous social discrimination based on Castes, there emerged Dalit Literature. Throughout India Dalit Writers register their opposition to Caste atrocity through their creation. This sense of agitation and fight started from Lord Buddha followed by many revolutionists like Guru Nanak, Kabir, Mahatma Jothirao Phule, Shagu Maharaj, Narayana Guru, Dr. Ambedkar, and Periyar. The struggle continues still. The Revolutionists used their own ideology and strategy to eradicate caste system from the society. Among the revolutionists Dr. Ambedkar is the unique personality who dedicated his whole life to abolish caste system in India. He used his own ideology and strategy in multidimensional way to bring social justice to all the Indians. He himself is a multi-talented person. He used all the opportunities perfectly to make India as Enlighten India. At the ultimate, he framed Indian Constitution based on the principle of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Dr. Ambedkar became the inspiration to many Social Activists and Dalit Writers. His ideology and strategy become the manifesto of many Social Activists and Dalit Writers. This Paper projects that Dalit Literature and Dalit Movements continued the Ideology and Strategy of Dr. Ambedkar to bring change in the society.

## **Dr. Ambedkar's Ideology and Strategy**

Dr. Ambedkar intended to implement his ideology like Capturing Political Power, Religious Conversion, Empowering Dalits, Attain Enlighten India and Create Casteless Society etc. He has written many books and spread his own ideas. He used many strategies to implement his ideology. For the empowerment of Dalits he insisted on the revolutionary slogan "Educate, Agitate, Organise". In order to create awareness among Dalit people, he used this slogan. By knowing the value of education he gives preference to education first in this slogan. Being a highly qualified educated person Dr. Ambedkar participated in the Round Table Conference in London in 1931 and fought for the rights of Indians. And his speech got attraction of all the people and press. Out of his experience he suggested that Education must be given first preference by the people.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar established "Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha" on 20th July 1924 at Bombay. The founding principles of the Sabha were "Educate, Agitate and Organize". One of the aims and objects of the Sabha was as under:

To promote the spread of education among the Depressed Class by opening Hostels or by employing such other means as may seem necessary or desirable. (Kshirsagar 82)

This paper discusses that Dalit Movements and Dalit Writers followed Dr. Ambedkar's revolutionary slogan "Educate, Agitate, and Organize"

## **Dr. Ambedkar on "Educate, Agitate, and Organize"**

Dr. Ambedkar was very much fond of teaching. Because he believes that the future of India will be depend upon Students community.

I am very fond of teaching profession. I am also very fond of students. I have dealt with them, I have lectured them in my life. I am very glad to talk to the students. A great lot of the future of this country must necessarily depend on the students of this country. Students are an intelligent part of the community and they can shape the public opinion. (Ambedkar Thoughts 70)

He insisted education with moral. According to him an educated man without character is a beast. That is the power of Education.

Education is a sword and being a double edged weapon is dangerous to wield. So an educated man without character and humanity is more dangerous than a beast. (Ambedkar Thoughts 71)

## **Dalit Literature**

### **Bama**

Bama's *Karukku* is the first Dalit auto biographical work in Tamil. In her works *Karukku* and *Sangati* she insisted Dr. Ambedkar's slogan "Educate Agitate Organize" Education everyone must have. Means of defense everyone must have. These are the paramount requirements of every man for his self-preservation. (Ambedkar Vol. 1, P. 62)

According to Dr. Ambedkar, education has various meanings. He not only sees education as academic one but also a tool which will change the society. Here, in her novel *Karukku* Bama shows education in both aspects.

Apparently it was just the same at the library. They would look at the Paraya lads from Cheri Street in a certain way, with certain contempt. Once, when Annan was signing out his books, he added his title, M.A., on a sudden impulse. Immediately the attendant brought him a stool to sit on, and what's more, began addressing him as 'Sir'. (*Karukku* 17)

In *Karukku*, when Bama's elder brother went to library in his village while in signing he added his degree as M.A behind his name. As soon as the attendant saw this, he brought stool to sit to him. So, education gives respect.

Because of my education alone I managed to survive among those who spoke the language of caste-difference and discrimination. (*Karukku* 22)

When Bama was a student, she was encouraged by her brother, to study well in order to throw away these indignities. She studied well and stood first. Many students from other castes joined with her because of her knowledge. As Dr. Ambedkar said she didn't believe in her fate, but believed in her strength. And she was awarded a prize for standing first among students in the S.S.L.C exam. You must abolish your slavery yourself. Do not depend for its abolition upon god, or superman (Ambedkar Thoughts 70). My final words of advice to you are educate, agitate and organize; have faith in yourself. With justice on our side I do not see how we can lose our battle. (Ambedkar Thoughts 72)

Dr. Ambedkar says that Dalit people should believe themselves. Out his experience he said that Dalits should not depend upon Gods and others.

History shows that where ethics and economics come in conflict, victory is always with economics. Vested interests have never been known to have willingly divested themselves unless there was sufficient force to compel them. (*Ambedkar Thoughts* 81)

Dr. Ambedkar says Economics defeats ethics. Government will only support the rich and upper caste people not the poor and Dalits. So the Depressed people should struggle and fight for their rights:

All the same, because of our caste and because of our poverty, every fellow treats us with contempt. If ever there is a problem or a disturbance, everyone, starting with the police, choose to blame and humiliate the women of our community. The government does not seem prepared to do anything to redress this. So we must take up the challenge ourselves. It's like the proverb that says, if a man sees a terrified dog, he is bound to chase it. If we continue to be frightened, everyone will take advantage of us. If we stand up for ourselves without caring whether we die or survive, they'll creep away with their tails between their legs. (*Sangati* 66)

For a long time, Dalits were suppressed and oppressed. They were treated like slaves. Unconsciously their minds were trained to be slaves. So, it is needed to create awareness among Dalits to protest against their social injustice. Dr. Ambedkar says that we should create awareness to a slave to realize his slavery then only he will protest against slavery. Most of the times Dalits are not aware that they are treated like slaves. So, the protesting attitude should be inculcated among Dalits to break their slavery chains. Once when we were shelling groundnuts, we girls discussed this among ourselves. Subbamma said:

'because haven't been to school or learnt anything, we go about like slaves all our lives, from the day we are born till the day we die. As if we are blind, even though we have eyes. That is why any old dog will make a grab at us when we are working in the fields. But it's only by struggling like this that we can eat; otherwise we have to starve, that's all.' (*Sangati* 118)

In the novel *Sangati*, one of the characters, Subbamma, expresses frustration regarding education. She is one of the daily wages labor. She has to work every day in the fields of upper caste people to lead her family. She expresses that without education though they have eyes they are blinds. So, education is important like light:

On 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics, we will be recognizing the principle of one man-one vote and one vote-one value. In our social and economic life, we shall by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man-one value. (*Ambedkar Thoughts* 80)

If I find the Constitution being misused, I shall be the first to burn it. (*Ambedkar Thoughts* 82)

Dr. Ambedkar shows his agitation. He went to the extreme to burn the constitution when it is being misused.

We who are asleep must open our eyes and look about us. We must not accept the injustice of our enslavement by telling ourselves it our fate, as if we have no true feelings; we must dare to stand up for change. We must crush all these institutions that use caste to bully us into submission and demonstrate that among human beings there are none who are high or low. (*Karukku* 28)

Bama keeps on registering her feeling of agitation throughout the novel. So Bama's works reflect Dr.Ambedkar's Mantra "Educate, Agitate and Organize."

### **Sharankumar Limbale**

Sharankumar Limbale's Marathi autobiography *Akkarmashi* was translated into English as *The Outcast*. The protagonist Sharan an illegitimate son of village Patil, a rich landlord of Basalegaon Hanumant Limbale and a poor Dalit woman Masamai, is the narrator.

Lost rights are never regained by begging and by appeals to the conscience of the usurper's but by relentless struggle. Goats are used for sacrificial offerings and not lions. (*Ambedkar Thoughts* 82)

Dr. Ambedkar motivates Dalits to be courageous as like Lion not like Goats. It creates agitating sense among Dalits and they will protest against social injustice.

I used clean clothes, bathed every day and washed myself clean with soap, and brushed my teeth with toothpaste. There was nothing unclean about me. Then in what sense was I untouchable? A high caste who is dirty was still considered touchable. (Limbale 107)

The narrator Sharan raises the rationalized question which shows his agitation. The writer Sharankumar Limbale registers his agitation through his character Sharan. Afterwards Sharan joined in Dalit Panthers Movement. Dalit Panthers Movement was established to organize all Dalits throughout India.

Political power is the key to all social progress and the scheduled castes can achieve their salvation if they captured this power by organizing themselves into a third party and holding the balance of power between the rival political parties of the Congress and Socialists. (*Ambedkar Thoughts* 45)

Dr. Ambedkar wanted to establish the political party as the third one for Dalits in national level except Congress and Socialists. He planned to found the Political Party called Republican Party of India in 1956. But unfortunately he passed away. Finally the followers of Dr. Ambedkar started Republican Party of India in 1957. The Party was broken into many. Later people started Dalit Panthers Movement to bring Dalits under one umbrella.

The Hindus hold to the sacredness of the social order. Caste has a divine basis. You must therefore destroy the sacredness and divinity with which caste has become invested. In the last analysis, this means you must destroy the authority of the shastras and vedas. (*Ambedkar Thoughts* 78)

Dr. Ambedkar said that Hindu Religion is the root cause for caste. He opposed Hinduism. He questioned God and His existence. He burnt all the Hindu Holy Scriptures. Finally as he

resolved “Though I was born a Hindu, I solemnly assure you that I will not die as a Hindu”, he converted to Buddhism.

He says God discriminates between man and man. He makes one man rich and the other poor. One is high caste and other untouchable..... We don't approve of this God. Nor his religion, nor this country because they ostracize us. (Limbale 62)

Sharan, the hero out *The Outcast* also did not accept Hindu Religion. Following Dr. Ambedkar he converted to Buddhism. It shows the feeling of agitation.

## **Dalit Movements**

### **1. Depressed India Association (Pune)**

Depressed India Association was founded by Ganesh Akkaji Gawai in 1917 at Pune. It came into existence in 1922.

The objectives of the Association were:

- To spread education among the Depressed Classes
- To introduce social reform
- To develop their moral and material condition

In order to achieve those objectives, it conducted many meetings and conferences, opened many schools for boys and girls and run a newspaper to vent the grievances of the Depressed Classes both in India and outside.

### **2. Hyderabad State Depressed Classes Association**

The Youth League of Ambedkarites was formed by P.R.Venkataswamy and B.S.Venkat Rao at Hyderabad on 17 May 1936. Later in 1938 it was renamed as Hyderabad State Depressed Classes Association.

The objectives:

- To organize the youth of the depressed classes under one banner.
- To enlighten the community on the evils of Hinduism.
- To obliterate existing caste differences among them.

### **3. Sanmarg Bodhak Nirashrit Samaj (Nagpur)**

The Sanmarg Bodhak Nirashrit Samaj was founded by Shri Kisan Fagu Bansod in 193 at Nagpur.

The objectives:

- To spread education among all the Depressed Classes.
- To organize all the Dalits under one banner.
- To reform the untouchable society.
- To struggle for human rights.

### **4. Rajputana Mehtar Sudhar Sabha.**

Rajputana Mehtar Sudhar Sabha was founded by Shri Gopalanand Maharaj in 1948 in the conference held at Udaimandir Bhangi Bustee, where the representatives of the Bhangi Community from various places in Rajasthan were present.

The Objectives of the Sabha were:

- To promote the spirit of unity among the community members.
- To promote social and material welfare of the members of the Bhangi community.
- To preach importance of education.

### 5. Bihar Rajak Sangh

Bihar Rajak Sangh was founded in early 1940's. Shri Nayantara Das was the General Secretary of this organization from 1947 to 1951.

The Objectives of this Organization:

- To educate the Children
- Not to take liquor at least on ceremonial occasions.
- Not to give or accept dowry.

### 6. The Bahujan Shikshan Sangh

The Bahujan Shikshan Sangh was formed in 1928 at Ahmednagar in Maharashtra. The main objective of the Sangh was to spread education amongst the Depressed Classes. The Sangh opened its first hostel for the Depressed Classes students in June 1948 at Sangamner in District Nagar. It was named as 'Siddharth Boarding'. The Sangh runs Janata High School Pune (1967), Siddharth Vidyalaya, Sangmner (1965), Sambodhi Vidyalaya, Nagar (1962), Siddharth High School, Sangamner (1970), Mahatma Phule Vidyalaya, Ghulewadi (1970), and 23 hostels at various places in Nagar, Pune, Aurangabad and Thane districts Maharashtra.

### 7. Adi-KeralotharanaSangham (AKS)

The Adi-Keralotharana Sangham was formed in 1927 in a conference of the Depressed Classes people at Calicut. It was led by K.Kelappan and C.Krishnan.

The activities of the Sangham were mainly concerned with the education of the Dalits, freedom for them to walk along public roads, and starting hostels for the Dalits students.

### Conclusion

The impact of Ambedkarism could be found in Dalit Literature.

The intellectual class is the class which can foresee, it is the class which can advise and give lead. In no country does the mass of the people live the life of intelligent thought and action. It is largely imitative and follows the intellectual class. There is no exaggeration in saying that the entire destiny of a country depends upon its intellectual class. If the intellectual class is honest, independent and disinterested it can be trusted to take the initiative and give a proper lead when a crisis arises. (Ambedkar Vol. 1, P. 71)

Following the words of Dr. Ambedkar the intellectuals keep on doing their social work through their writings. And Social Activists also keep on doing their tremendous work in order to bring equality in the society. Both Dalit Movements and Dalit Literature continued Dr. Ambedkar's Ideology and strategy.

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